

# BOSTON GLOBE

## Baubles and Babe Ruth on display in treasurer's office, headed to eBay



Suzanne Kreiter/Globe staff

Treasurer Deborah Goldberg gave a tour of unclaimed state property which will be auctioned off via eBay starting Saturday.

By [Joshua Miller](#) Globe Staff October 26, 2015

A long time ago, in safe-deposit boxes not so far away, people stashed a pile of gold coins, a 1951 five-peso bill, a Bruce Jenner trading card, a silver serving platter, a nice Rolex watch with a leather strap, a 1949 Red Sox pennant, and a 25-cent (yes, cent) US bill from back in the 19th century, when fractional paper currency was in vogue.

After languishing in boxes for which payments had lapsed and then being held at Massachusetts banks for at least seven years, the items were turned over to the state treasurer's office. Attempts to get them to their rightful owners or the owners' heirs failed, Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg said Monday, so the currency, trading cards, and thousands of other items are now set to be auctioned on eBay as part of the state's annual sale of abandoned property.

Standing amid display cases filled with baubles, beavers (etched in Canadian gold coins), and a Babe Ruth baseball card (he's in New York Yankees pinstripes), Goldberg said that select items would be put on display at locations across the state — Boston, South Yarmouth, Worcester, New Bedford, and Springfield — so people all over Massachusetts can take a gander. Those displays will all happen before the first of several auctions go live at noon on Halloween.

The state's eBay auctions of abandoned property — more than 8,300 bid lots since November 2005 — have brought in more than \$2.1 million for state coffers. Goldberg said she expected this year's stuff to fetch upward of \$300,000.

But wait! What if you recognize one of those Canadian beaver gold coins as your own?



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**A Red Sox flag from 1949 will be auctioned off.**

If you can prove an item is yours, the Treasury will pull it. But if it's already been scooped up by a keen-eyed collector, the state will give you the item's monetary value.

The treasurer, who took office in January, emphasized the lengths to which her office goes to find the rightful owners. An "expansive group" of customer service workers do lots of outreach to try to find the right persons, she said.

There are paper trails from banks' safe-deposit records, but, she said, "often, it's someone who has passed away, who hasn't had an estate. There's always a different story for almost every single item, but the idea is and the challenge is to get the original items back to their owners."

Almost all — 99 percent — of the tangible unclaimed property comes from abandoned safe-deposit boxes, Treasury officials said. But there are occasionally items, such as jewelry, that come from people who are incarcerated or are in the hospital and die with no next of kin.

Goldberg oversees not just forgotten wrist watches and other tangible property but also about \$2 billion in unclaimed monetary property, such as bank accounts and insurance payments. The website to see if some of that money might be yours is [findmassmoney.com](http://findmassmoney.com).

But you probably already know that by now. The office spends about \$3 million a year advertising — on the radio, in newspapers, and online — to let people know about unclaimed property, said a Treasury spokeswoman, Chandra Allard.

And, she said, in 2014 the state returned \$113 million in property to its rightful owners, mostly Massachusetts residents.

The force was definitely with those folks.

View Gallery Photos: Items to be auctioned off



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**Treasurer Deborah Goldberg showed the media a dollar coin from 1851 as she gave a tour of the unclaimed state property which will be auctioned off starting Saturday.**



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**A silver dollar from 1798 is among the items to be auctioned on eBay as part of the state's annual sale of abandoned property.**





SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

A Babe Ruth card and a Bruce Jenner card will be up for bid. The Jenner card will start at \$1 but is expected to go much higher.



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

This coffee urn is valued around \$200-\$300.



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**This jewelry grouping is valued under \$100.**



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**This pile of one ounce gold coins is worth \$38,500.00  
at current market value.**



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**These are fractional currency, including a 25 cent bill from 1874.**



SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**This Rolex watch is valued at \$8,500.**





SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

**This emerald ring is valued at a few hundred dollars.**

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